



July 9, 2003

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
U.S. House of Representative
2301 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Fattah:

On behalf of the National Urban League (NUL), I am writing in strong support of H.R. 236, the Student Bill of Rights. We are pleased that the proposal acknowledges that in too many states despite years of litigation—students from low- income families most often attend the most poorly funded and lowest achieving schools. NUL is committed to the fundamental value of, and concrete investment in, universal quality public education. Our public schools have been, and will continue to be the principal institution for meeting the educational needs of African Americans.

The lack of attention to and enforcement of, equalizing educational opportunities is a glaring reality. In fact we believe that equalizing educational opportunity must become the center-point of any true systemic education reform effort. With the false promise that adequate funding would certainly follow the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education act, and the recent release of the National Conference of State Legislatures-State Budget Update April 2003 report, which states that, ...“at least 21 states have proposals that would affect funding for K-12 education”, it is imperative that Congress move quickly to give this bill full consideration.

The National Urban League understands that money is not the sole measure of effective schools, however, we do know that essential elements such as teacher preparation, class size, challenging curriculum and technology should serve as the basic criteria for evaluating school success. The Student Bill of Rights goes a long way toward fulfilling the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education* and focuses on the affirmative role the federal government must play in ensuring that our public schools meet the needs of all children.

As we begin to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, we salute your commitment to public schools and the children they serve.

Sincerely,

Marc H. Morial
CEO & President